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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda items 41, 55, 76 and 149
THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION
UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 27 May 1999 from the Permanent Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our respective Governments, we have the honour to bring to your attention the resolution on the status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention, which regulates the status of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its five successor States in the Convention (see annex). The resolution represents the first decision taken by a treaty body on this issue, and reflects the consensual legal and political position of the Contracting Parties, and therefore, we believe, it has relevance for similar and still pending situations. The resolution was adopted by consensus at the 7th Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, which was held from 10 to 18 May 1999 in San José, Costa Rica. The Ramsar Convention has 114 Contracting Parties, and its depositary is the Secretary-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The status of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its five successor States in the Ramsar Convention has been formally regulated on the basis of facts previously well established by the international community, i.e., that the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has dissolved and ceased to exist, and that it has been replaced by five successor States, none of which continues the international legal personality of their common predecessor.

Relevant rules of general international law relating to the succession of treaties in the case of the dissolution of a predecessor State - namely, that

all successor States have equal rights and obligations vis-à-vis a predecessor State and should consequently be treated equally and that all successor States in general continue to be bound by treaty obligations of predecessor State but do not enjoy the status of their predecessor in treaties unless they have deposited a notification on succession - were applied to the aforementioned facts. The two successor States to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that had not established their status as Contracting Parties in the Ramsar Convention have been requested, if they wish to be considered as Contracting Parties, to do so in the same manner as the other three successor States have done.

Our respective Governments believe that you should, in your capacity as depositary of international treaties, note and give due consideration to the consensual position of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on the legal issue of the status of the five successor States to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to a treaty to which that State had been a Contracting Party before it dissolved and ceased to exist.

We should like to ask your assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 41, 55, 76 and 149, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Bosnia and Herzegovina

(Signed) Naste ČALOVSKI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Macedonia

(Signed) Ivan ŠIMONOVIĆ
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Croatia

(Signed) Danilo TÜRK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Slovenia

Annex

Resolution on the status of Yugoslavia in the Ramsar Convention, adopted by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1971), held at San José from 10 to 18 May 1999

Sponsored by Albania, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Pakistan, Slovenia, Turkey, the United States of America and Uruguay.

1. Referring to COP7 DOC.23 on the status of Yugoslavia in the Convention;

2. Noting that the Contracting Party, "The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" has ceased to exist and has been replaced by five successor States;

3. Taking into account that successor States in general continue to be bound by the treaty obligations of the predecessor State; and

4. Acknowledging that three of the successor States are Contracting Parties;

The Conference of the Contracting Parties

5. Calls upon Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to submit to the depositary a notification of succession to the Ramsar Convention as the other successor States have done.